New food policy

†15. SHRI JAI PARKASH AGGARWAL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government proposes to formulate a comprehensive food policy in view of instability in the production of foodgrains, pulses and sugar;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when the new food policy is likely to be formulated?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) to (c) There is no proposal under consideration to formulate a new food policy. The production of foodgrains, pulses and sugar during the last three financial years indicates a steady increase and as per the Fourth Advance Estimates for the year 2007-08, the production of foodgrains and pulses is at an all-time record. However, the Government already has a comprehensive food policy under which Minimum Support Price (MSP) operations are carried out by the Government agencies in districts all over the country where there is marketable surplus of foodgrains. Farmers have the option to sell their produce at MSP or in the open market, as is advantageous to them. This policy ensures that farmers get remunerative prices for their produce. This also enables the Government to procure foodgrains for servicing the Targeted Public Distribution System and welfare schemes. Maintenance of a buffer stock of foodgrains to ensure food security is also one of the important objectives of the food policy. Further, the Government has launched the 'National Food Security Mission' with the aim of increasing production of wheat, rice and pulses through area expansion and productivity enhancement; restoring soil fertility and productivity; creating employment opportunities and enhancing farm-level economy to restore confidence of farmers. The Mission is presently being implemented in 312 identified districts of 17 States of the country.

Farming technique for small holding farmers

†16. SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:
DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:
Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that 80 per cent of agricultural land in the country is divided into parts of 1.5 hectares each;

(b) if not, the actual fact in this regard;

(c) whether the production technique based on machines can be beneficial for the agricultural production in farms of small holdings; and

(d) if so, Government's response thereto and the technique being suggested by scientists to farmers having small holdings for increase in production?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) According to the 7th quinquennial Agriculture Census 2000-01, operational holdings in the country in the category of 'below 2.0 hectares' were 81.8 per cent of the total operational holdings.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.